NUMB. CCLXII.

The SPECTATOR.

Nulla venenato Littera mista Joco est. OV.

Monday, December 31. 1711.

I think my self highly obliged to the Publick for their kind Acceptance of a Paper which visits them every Morning, and has in it none of those *Seasonings* that recommend so many Writings which are in vogue among us.

On the one Side, my Paper has not in it a Word of News, a Reflection in Politicks, Stroke of Party; so, on the other, there are no sensible Touches of Infidelity, no obscene Jests or Satyrs upon Priesthood, Marriage, and other popular Topicks of Ridicule; no private Scandal, nor any thing that may tend to the Defamation of particular Persons, Families, or Societies.

There is not one of these abovementioned Subjects would not sell a very indifferent Paper, if I thought of gratifying the Publick by such mean and base Methods. But notwithstanding I have rejected every thing that favours of Party, every thing that is loose and immoral, and every thing that might create Uneasiness in the Minds of private Persons, I find that the Demand for my Paper has encreased every Month since their first Appearance in the World. This does not perhaps reflect so much Honour upon my self, as on my Readers, who give a much greater Attention to Discourses of Virtue and Morality, than ever I expected or indeed could hope.

When I broke loose from that great Body of Writers who have employed their Wit and Parts in propagating Vice and Irreligion, I did not question but I should be treated as an odd kind of Fellow that had a Mind to appear singular in my Way of Writing. But the general Reception I have found, convinces me that the World is not so corrupt as many are apt to imagine; and that if those Men of Genius who have been employed in viciating the Age and Debauching Mankind, had endeavoured to rectify and amend it, they needed not to have sacrificed their good Sense and Virtue to their Fame and Reputation. No Man is so sunk in Vice and Ignorance, but there are still some hidden Seeds of Goodness and Knowledge in him; which give him a Relish of such Reflections and Speculations as have an Aptness in them to improve the Mind and to make the Heart better.

I have shewn in a former Paper, with how much Care I have avoided all such Thoughts as are loose, obscene, or immoral; and I believe my Reader would still think the better of me, if he knew the Pains I am at in qualifying what I write after such a Manner, that nothing may be interpreted as aimed at private Persons. For this Reason when I draw any faulty Character, I consider all those Persons to whom the Malice of the World may possibly apply it, and take care to dash it with such particular Circumstances as may prevent all such ill-natured Applications. If I write any thing on a black Man, I run over in my Mind all the eminent Persons in the Nation who are of that Complection: When I place an imaginary Name at the Head of a Character, I examine every Syllable and Letter of it, that it may not bear any Resemblance to one that is real. I know very well the Value which every Man sets upon his Reputation, and how painful it is to be exposed to the Mirth and Derision of the Publick, and should therefore scorn to divert my Reader at the Expence of any private Man.

As I have been thus tender of every particular Person's Reputation, so I have taken more than ordinary Care not to give Offence to those who appear in the higher Figures of Life. I would not make my self merry even with a Piece of Pasteboard that is invested with a publick Character; for which Reason I have never glanced upon the late designed Procession of his Holiness and his Attendants, notwithstanding it might have afforded Matter to many ludicrous Speculations. Among those

those Advantages which the Publick may reap from this Paper, it is not the leaſt, that it draws Mens Minds off from the Bitterneſs of Party, and furniſhes them with Subjects of Diſcourſe that may be treated without Warmth or Paſſion. This is ſaid to have been the firſt Deſign of thoſe Gentlemen who ſet on Foot the Royal Society; and had then a very good Effect, as it turned many of the greateſt Geniuss of that Age to the Diſquiſitions of natural Knowledge, who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the ſame Parts and Application, might have ſet their Country in a Flame. The Air-Pump, the Barometer, the Quadrant, and the like Inventions, were thrown out to thoſe buſy Spirits, as Tubs and Barrels are to a Whale, that he may let the Ship ſail on without Diſturbance, while he diverts himſelf with thoſe innocent Amuſements.

I have been ſo very ſcrupulous in this Particular of not hurting any Man's Reputation, that I have forborn mentioning even ſuch Authors as I could not name with Honour. This I muſt confeſs to have been a Piece of very great Self-denial: For as the Publick reliſhes nothing better than the Ridicule which turns upon a Writer of any Eminence, ſo there is nothing which a Man that has but a very ordinary Talent in Ridicule may execute with greater Eaſe. One might raiſe Laughter for a Quarter of a Year together upon the Works of a Perſon who has publiſhed but a very few Volumes. For which Reaſons I am aſtoniſhed, that thoſe who have appeared againſt this Paper have made ſo very little of it. The Criticiſms which I have hitherto publiſhed, have been made with an Intention rather to diſcover Beauties and Excellencies in the Writers of my own Time, than to publiſh any of their Faults and Imperfections. In the mean while I ſhould take it for a very great Favour from ſome of my underhand Detractors, if they would break all Meaſures with me ſo far, as to give me a Pretence for examining their Performances with an impartial Eye: Nor ſhall I look upon it as any Breach of Charity to criticiſe the Author, ſo long as I keep clear of the Perſon.

In the mean while, till I am provoked to ſuch Hoſtilities, I ſhall from Time to Time endeavour to do Juſtice to thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the politer Parts of Learning, and to point out ſuch Beauties in their Works as may have eſcaped the Obſervation of others.

As the firſt Place among our *Engliſh* Poets is due to *Milton*, and as I have drawn more Quotations out of him than from any other, I ſhall enter into a regular Criticiſm upon his *Paradiſe loſt*, which I ſhall publiſh every *Saturday* till I have given my Thoughts upon that Poem. I ſhall not however preſume to impoſe upon others my own particular Judgment on this Author, but only deliver it as my private Opinion. Criticiſm is of a very large Extent, and every particular Maſter in this Art has a favourite Paſſages in an Author, which will equally ſtrike the beſt Judges. It will be for me if I diſcover many Beauties or Imperfections which others have not attended to, and I ſhall be very glad to ſee any of our eminent Writers publiſh their Diſcoveries on the ſame Subject. In ſhort, I would always be underſtood to write my Papers of Criticiſm in the Spirit which Horace has expreſſed in thoſe two famous Lines,

—— Si quid noviſti rectius iſtis
Candidus imperti, ſi non his utere mecum.

If you have made any better Remarks of your own, communicate them with Candour; if not, make uſe of theſe I preſent you with.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this preſent Monday, being the 21ſt of December, will be preſented a Comedy call'd the Northern Laſs, or the Neſt of Fools. The Part of the Northern Laſs by Mrs. Bicknell, Sir Philip Lyar by Mr. Wilks, Tridewell by Mr. Mills, Sir Paul Squelch by Johnſon, Bulfinch by Mr. Eſtcourt, Widgin by Mr. Bullock, Old Anvil by Mr. Spillar, Nonſenſe by Mr. Norris, Howd'ee by Mr. Leber, Beavis by Mr. Bickerſtaff, Pate by Mr. Bullock, Victoria by Mrs. Knight.

By Reaſon of the Adjournment of the Parliament, ſeveral Lovers of Painting being out of Town, have deſired the Sale of Pictures at the 3 Chairs in the Little Piazza of Covent Garden to be delay'd; they will therefore not be ſhewn on New Year's Day and the following Days, but the Week after, as is now advertiſed.

At the Green Man and Still in Grace-Church Street, for the Accomodation of Gentlemen in Town and Country, is ſold a rare Compoſition with which at a Minute's Notice may be made a Bowl of the cleareſt and beſt Punch as can be drank, only by adding to it the like Quantity of Spring-Water: This Compoſition is of the beſt French Brandy, Batavia Arrack, Juice of the fineſt Lemons, beſt double refined Loaf-Sugar, of each an equal proportion, to anſwer the like Quantity of Spring-Water: This is only to ſave Gentlemen trouble in preparing it. It may be drank in Eaſt India as a noble Cordial, and will never decay, but be the better for keeping. Price but 3 s. a Quart.

William Lovejoy, Silkman, at the Croſs-Keys in the Strand near the Fountain Tavern, has to ſell a Parcel of very fine French Bordeaux Price Claret, brought directly from the Port of Southampton from on board the Providence Prize, being very fine neat, and in no ones Hands but his own ſince landed: As alſo a few 8 Jars of Lucca Oil, by the Real Galley, being extraordinary fine, and will ſell the Claret for 28 l. per Hogſhead and 30 s. per Dozen, and the Oil at 13 s. per Gallon and 3 s. 6 d. per Quart.

Wines to be ſold by Retail.

Excellent Red and White Port, and Red and White Lisbon, being neat Wines as they came from the Growth, the beſt Growth in Portugal. To be ſold by the Importer thereof in Brabant-Court in Philpot-Lane, viz. Red and White Port at 18 s. per Gallon or 14 l. per Hhd. Red and White Lisbon at 18 s. 6 d. per Gallon or 16 l. per Hhd. Attendance will be given every Day till 6 a Clock.

The Vapours in Women infallibly Cured in a Moment, ſo as never to return again, by an admirable Chymical Cure, a few drops of which takes off a Fit in a Moment, diſpels Sickneſs, clears the Head, takes away all Swimming, Giddineſs, Dimneſs of Sight, Flushings in the Face, &c. to a Miracle, and certainly prevents the Vapours returning again, for by Removing the very Cauſe it perfectly Cures as Hundreds have experienced: It alſo ſtrengthens the Stomach and Bowels, and cauſes Lively and ſettled Health. Is ſold only at Mrs. Osborn's, Toy-ſhop, at the Sign and Crown under St. Dunſtan's Church in Fleet-ſtreet, at 2 s. 6 d. the Bottle, with directions. Beware of Counterfeits, for ſuch are abroad.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in: as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.